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# The Clear Print



The San Diego Tracking Team Newsletter ♦ October, 2009

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Look! It's a ...

What is your fondest memory from a tracking transect? Was it seeing your first mountain lion track, a live bobcat, or maybe tracks from a ringtail? Mine is none of the above. I'm still waiting for the mountain lion track--a live lion would be even better--although the scat we once found was pretty exciting. But during a recent transect at Blue Sky, while walking along with our eyes glued to the ground, we heard a slight rustling from a laurel sumac bush, which was coming back beautifully after the fires. Trying to picture what wonderful mammal might step out onto the trail, my two fellow trackers and I paused to watch. Suddenly, about 15 feet in front of us, an adult roadrunner hopped onto the trail, heading east in our direction. Imagine our surprise when he dipped his head slightly, fanned his crest and tail feathers, vocalized faintly, and continued slowly in our direction, eyeing us with suspicion. Frozen in amazement, two of us moved slowly, as if practicing tai chi, to position our cameras to get that much anticipated perfect photo as our feathered friend approached. Passing within three feet of us, he continued in his intended direction, veering just slightly around us. Resisting the temptation to reach out and touch his beautiful feathers, we turned slowly, all the while trying to position our cameras without startling our brave friend. Then, while we raised camera to eye, he completed his pass and picked up speed, covering ground in the normal roadrunner fashion...no time to waste. Within a second or two he had already climbed the hill, lost to the eye in the overgrown trail. Another failed attempt at a beautiful photograph, but a wonderful memory instead.



Roadrunner Scat Photo taken 8-18-07

So what's your most memorable transect sighting? If you have one to share, please forward it to Nancy Dow at [nancydowdtt@gmail.com](mailto:nancydowdtt@gmail.com) and you might see it in a future issue of Clear Print.

Anna Gateley-Stanton

## Gait Quiz

By Anna Gateley-Stanton

Test your knowledge of gaits by seeing how many correct answers you can come up with. The list at the top contains all the answers, but some of them are used more than once. The answers can be found on page [7](#).

1-2-1 lope	hind
2X2 lope	increasing
asymmetrical	lope
diagonal trot	narrows
diagonal walk	overstep
direct register walk	rotary gallop
equal	trot
front	walk
gallop	Z gallop
groupings	

1. Moving from slowest to fastest, gaits are: \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_.
2. At no point during a \_\_\_\_ does the animal lose contact with the ground.
3. An \_\_\_\_ walk is known as an amble which is a fast walk.
4. As the speed increases, the track pattern/trail width \_\_\_\_.
5. A \_\_\_\_ is faster than a trot, but slower than a gallop, and much more energy efficient than the gallop.
6. Finding both hind tracks in front of both front tracks in a track grouping is an indication that the gait is a \_\_\_\_.
7. Having alternating front and hind tracks within a group is an indication that the gait is a \_\_\_\_.
8. A skunk track pattern will sometimes show a \_\_\_\_.
9. A gallop leaves an \_\_\_\_ track pattern.
10. A transverse gallop is also called a \_\_\_\_.
11. With walks and trots, when the registry of a hind foot moves father ahead of its associated front foot, the animal is \_\_\_\_ its speed.
12. With a \_\_\_\_, the rear tracks are completely contained within the front tracks.

13. A \_\_\_ is a gait faster than a walk, with diagonally opposite legs striking the ground together.
14. In a 2x2 lope, an animal becomes airborne by pushing off with the \_\_\_ feet.
15. A zig zag or diagonal pattern, with tracks not in groupings, usually means the gait is a \_\_\_ or a \_\_\_.
16. A \_\_\_ is the fastest gait.
17. With a walk and a trot, the tracks are an \_\_\_ distance apart.
18. If you see both hind in front of both front tracks in a grouping with lots of distance between groupings, you have a \_\_\_.
19. Track \_\_\_ become farther and farther apart with increased speed.
20. Another name for C gallop is \_\_\_.
21. With lopes and gallops, you will see track \_\_\_ with some distance between them.
22. Animals become momentarily airborne with \_\_\_ and \_\_\_.
23. If you find fairly equally spaced double prints, showing the hind track superimposed over the front track (direct register) on the same side, you have a \_\_\_ or a \_\_\_.
24. Weasels sometimes travel in a \_\_\_.
25. In a rotary or transverse lope, an animal becomes airborne by pushing off with the \_\_\_ feet.
26. When the order of the footfalls is the order they appear in the track pattern from the beginning of a group to the end of the group, you have a \_\_\_.

How did you do???

Check your answers!

Feel free to submit your own quiz for a future issue of [The Clear Print](#).

## Tracking Corner—What Do You Think?

The mystery tracks for this issue come from Denise Harter taken in northern Escondido in April 2008. Take a look and let us know what you think they might be. Remember there is no right answer to this question. A few folks have been consulted and there isn't a clear consensus!



If you are planning on attending the ISPT conference and are willing to help at the conference with registration or help drive out-of-town travelers to the site, please contact Anna at [ags@san.rr.com](mailto:ags@san.rr.com) or 858-530-1621.

## **SDTT and WTI to Host ISPT Symposium “A Gathering of Practicing Trackers”**

**By Barry Martin**

What does all this alphabet soup of acronyms mean?? I'll spell it out for you. This October 16-17th, the San Diego Tracking Team (SDTT) and Western Tracking Institute (WTI) will be co-hosting the International Society of Professional Trackers (ISPT) annual gathering. The venue for the event is the Schoepe Scout Reservation at Lost Valley located north of Warner Springs. This is a remote location that is teeming with wildlife and excellent substrate for some great tracking!

You may ask, “Do I have to be a “professional” tracker to participate?” No! If you are interested at all in tracking, whether animals or lost people or both, you are welcome to attend. The “P” in ISPT could stand for “practicing” since this organization is open to practicing trackers of all abilities whether hobbyists or professional.

What goes on at these gatherings? I like to think of these get-togethers as opportunities to get caught up on the latest developments in the world of tracking. The list of presenters often includes people doing wildlife research using tracking, search and rescue tracking, and law enforcement related tracking. They often present topics of interest during the weekend that have to do with recent projects, new techniques, and technologies that are being developed within the tracking discipline.

ISPT is an organization that is open to all people interested in tracking, but a professional approach to tracking is encouraged; however, it has been pointed out to me that some folks are more “leisure trackers” who don't want to associate the word “professional” with what they do with their leisure time. So if you like tracking during your time off as a way to unwind, think of this gathering as a leisurely tracking get-away! An opportunity to learn, for example, how to teach your friends and family about tracking, how to track bobcats and mountain lions, or how to preserve tracks through photographs, drawings, or making track casts.

The ISPT was set up to be a forum where ideas can be exchanged; networking opportunities exist, learning can take place, and a fun time can be enjoyed with your tracking friends, all with the idea of furthering the art and science of tracking. If you are at all interested in tracking you will not want to miss this. For all of us in San Diego, it is a rare opportunity since this will be the first time we have had this event so nearby. It will likely be a long time before it is held this close again. There will be trackers from all over the US and I know of at least one, Adriaan Louw, who will be presenting from South Africa, making this a truly international gathering.

The opportunity to pick the brains of trackers from far and wide is hard to resist, and I always look forward to these gatherings to reconnect with friends I have made over the years at previous ISPT weekends. I highly encourage you to attend even if just for one day, and, if you've never been to one of these events, may this begin your association with a tremendous group of people. As a member of the SDTT or WTI networks of trackers, the discounted “early bird” price is available to you right up to the weekend. Times are tight so I'm sure this

will help and for those who are not trackers by trade but are interested, this conference will be well worth the price.

I hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to come to Lost Valley for a great tracking weekend. You can camp or stay in one of the cabins (nice, each sleeps 8 in bunks). The facilities are excellent with running water, flush toilets, and a really nice dining hall where our meals and programs will be held. You will learn a lot and meet some really fun people. If you would like to learn more about the ISPT conference, go to [www.ISPT.org](http://www.ISPT.org). Click on Download a Registration packet for Tracking 2009 to register. If you have any questions regarding the conference, please call 858-775-7227 for more information.

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## Welcome to....

We would like to introduce the newest member to the San Diego Tracking Team, Nancy Dow. She will be our first point of contact and handle a majority of our administrative duties. Nancy comes to us with a great deal of experience in the non-profit sector. For 15 years, she worked for The Arc of San Diego in their Community Living Services department and for the past 11 years has been employed by The State Council on Developmental Disabilities as a Community Program Specialist. She is committed to the growth of supports and services of individuals with developmental disabilities and advocating for their legal, civil and service rights.

Nancy graduated from Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas and moved to San Diego in 1982. She resides in Rancho Pensacitos with her husband. Their oldest daughter, Emily, is a sophomore at Cal State Fullerton and Audrey resides at home and is a senior at Westview High School. Her hobbies include hiking, walking, cooking, reading, watching her kids play sports, and spending time with her friends. A committed environmentalist, she is also very eager to learn more about tracking and the wildlife living in our canyons and deserts. You will find that she is an optimistic – her glass is always half full, easy-going, and willing to go that extra mile to make things run smoothly for SDTT.

Please feel free to contact her with any questions or suggestions for our next edition of our newsletter at [nancydowdtt@gmail.com](mailto:nancydowdtt@gmail.com).

## Answers to Gait Quiz:

1. Moving from slowest to fastest, gaits are: (walk), (trot), (lope), and (gallop).
2. At no point during a (walk) does the animal lose contact with the ground.
3. An (overstep) walk is known as an amble which is a fast walk.
4. As the speed increases, the track pattern/trail width (narrows).
5. A (lope) is faster than a trot, but slower than a gallop, and much more energy efficient than the gallop.
6. Finding both hind tracks in front of both front tracks in a track grouping is an indication that the gait is a (gallop).
7. Having alternating front and hind tracks within a group is an indication that the gait is a (lope).
8. A skunk track pattern will sometimes show a (1-2-1 lope).
9. A gallop leaves an (asymmetrical) track pattern.
10. A transverse gallop is also called a (Z gallop).
11. With walks and trots, when the registry of a hind foot moves farther ahead of its associated front foot, the animal is (increasing) its speed.
12. With a (direct register walk), the rear tracks are completely contained within the front tracks.
13. A (trot) is a gait faster than a walk, with diagonally opposite legs striking the ground together.
14. In a 2x2 lope, an animal becomes airborne by pushing off with the (hind) feet.
15. A zig zag or diagonal pattern, with tracks not in groupings, usually means the gait is a (walk) or a (trot).
16. A (gallop) is the fastest gait.
17. With a walk and a trot, the tracks are an (equal) distance apart.
18. If you see both hind in front of both front tracks in a grouping with lots of distance between groupings, you have a (gallop).
19. Track (groupings) become farther and farther apart with increased speed.
20. Another name for C gallop is (rotary gallop).
21. With lopes and gallops, you will see track (groupings) with some distance between them.
22. Animals become momentarily airborne with (lopes) and (gallops).
23. If you find fairly equally spaced double prints, showing the hind track superimposed over the front track (direct register) on the same side, you have a (diagonal walk) or a (diagonal trot).

24. Weasels sometimes travel in a (2X2 lope).
  25. In a rotary or transverse lope, an animal becomes airborne by pushing off with the (front) feet.
  26. When the order of the footfalls is the order they appear in the track pattern from the beginning of a group to the end of the group, you have a (gallop).
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*SDTT would like to thank  
Jenny Gladheim  
for her many years of  
service.*

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